

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

1.0 Purpose

Environmental analysis is part of determining how a project should be developed – environmental impacts are factored into the decisions made. The overarching law for federal-aid projects is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which requires federal agencies to consider the impacts of their actions on the environment and the public disclosure of environmental impacts before project decisions are made. Environmental concerns are factored into decisions made as a project is developed and advanced. The NEPA document also publicly discloses the decision-making process. The NEPA document should not be written to defend a project decision that has already been made.

The NEPA requires compliance with a variety of environmental laws, regulations and executive orders. Thus environmental compliance is multi-disciplinary and requires the involvement of a number of environmental team members. Consultations with a variety of environmental agencies also are required. *Thus, collaboration and communication amongst all team members (environmental and design) are critical for the successful advancement of a project.* This manual cannot replace project team interaction.

The Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA) must be complied with for state-aid projects. Several federal environmental laws concern federal actions (and not merely federal funds) so the Project Manager (PM) and local government sponsors should check with the Office of Environmental Services to determine which federal requirements apply to state-funded projects.

This manual will provide the environmental analyst and the PM with ample information so that projects can be developed in compliance with applicable federal and state laws. The information provided will aid in developing uniform and quality documents.

Use of this manual by project development staff will ensure document consistency, quality, and completeness throughout the project development phase. The procedures and documentation requirements provided herein, will fully meet the requirements of NEPA and other related federal and state laws, rules, and regulations. Use of this manual should expedite projects from preliminary engineering through construction by providing guidance for sound practices, procedures, and decisions. The manual approaches the environmental process through an interdisciplinary team approach as required by NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

The interdisciplinary approach combines the strengths of engineering with the findings of the natural and social science disciplines throughout project development. With this approach, a sound and needed public works project will serve the needs of the community and ensure that the public has access to the transportation decision-making process at the project level.

This manual contains sections that describe in detail the process by which transportation projects should be developed by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and their consultants. Each section provides the environmental analysts with an understanding of the project development process and its requirements including agency coordination, situational solutions, technical assistance with engineering and environmental documentation, and public involvement. Links are provided to document templates throughout this manual. A general link to document libraries (organized by discipline) also can be used.

Local governments preparing documents for Transportation Enhancement (TE) projects (funding codes C220, L220, Q22, or 33B) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects (funding code L400) should refer to Chapter XI of this manual for procedures specific to these two project types.

Environmental analysis does not end with the approval of the NEPA document. Issues such as project changes must be considered as project development advances. Local government sponsors should retain the services of an environmental team throughout project development.

2.0 Authority

Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA), Title 32 – Highways, Bridges, and Ferries, also known as the Georgia Code of Public Transportation states “the department shall be the state agency to receive and shall have control and supervision of all funds appropriated for public road work by the state and activities incident thereto”

The [Plan Development Process \(PDP\)](#) “sets forth the current procedures and steps necessary for the GDOT to administer federal-aid projects in accordance with the policies and objectives of Titles 23, 40, and 42 United States Code, and to administer state-aid projects to fulfill the policies and objectives of Title 32, Official Code of Georgia Annotated.”

3.0 Scope (User)

Although this manual can be used and referenced by any entity interested in the environmental documentation process, it is intended to provide guidance to those who prepare and review environmental documents for GDOT projects.

4.0 Quality Control/Quality Assurance (QC/QA)

All project teams including GDOT staff, consultants, and local governments, must strive to submit high quality documents that can be approved on the first submission. Subject matter experts (SMEs) will be held accountable for the content and quality of the studies and documents submitted. A sloppy presentation of studies calls into question the quality of the work being presented.

Quality Control (QC) refers to the daily processes, practices and checks in place to control the quality of the environmental field work and reports. The Quality Control for all studies is the responsibility of the SME who conducts the study and field work and prepares the report, as well as the thorough review and checks performed by the SME’s immediate supervisor. The SME must confirm that the report accurately presents the study findings and meets all current requirements. The report should present the study findings in a logical manner and not contain

contradictory information. The SME also must review their work product for spelling and grammar.

The NEPA analyst preparing the environmental document has an additional task with regard to QC. The NEPA analysts also must confirm that information being discussed in the NEPA document is consistent with the supporting study, even if they did not author the supporting study. They must question results of the supporting study if it is not consistent with what is known about the project or about the discipline. They also must ensure that the various sections of the document are consistent and do not present contradictory information.

For environmental reports and NEPA documents prepared by the GDOT's Office of Environmental Services, the preparer's immediate supervisor will provide the QC review. For NEPA documents prepared by district environmentalists, district design staff will provide the QC review. While the district's design staff will not be an environmental SME, they will ensure that the analyses contained in the document matches the proposed project.

Quality Assurance (QA) refers to the higher level review of environmental reports and documents. Quality Assurance is conducted prior to the submittal of a report or document to a review agency by an independent reviewer who serves as a "cold reader" to ensure that the information is presented in a logical and coherent manner. The QA individual for the NEPA document is not expected to review each and every technical study. For environmental reports and NEPA documents prepared by GDOT staff, the QA review shall be performed by either an environmental office Section Chief, an Assistant Administrator, or a (different) consultant assignee pre-approved by the GDOT. The QA review will ensure that all procedural and regulatory requirements have been met.

Consultants are expected to have procedures to ensure that their documents are of the highest quality prior to submittal to GDOT. A [QC-QA review sheet](#) must accompany every report and document submitted. Studies and documents will not be circulated or reviewed without this sheet. For environmental reports and NEPA documents prepared by consultants, a minimum of one additional QA review shall be provided by either the environmental office Team Leader, Manager, or Assistant Administrator, or a (different) consultant assignee pre-approved by GDOT.

Consultant documents and reports requiring more than two GDOT reviews will be brought to the attention of the reviewer's Assistant State Environmental Administrator.

Upon review, the QA reviewer may request that the preparer make additional document revisions in order to bring the document up to quality and/or GDOT/agency standards prior to submitting the study for state and/or federal agency approval. The SME shall make the necessary revisions based on the QA comments and/or call a meeting to discuss the comments with the QA reviewer prior to submittal of the document to the agencies for approval.

The following are common errors that have occurred and have been noted to cause fatal flaws in environmental documents:

1. The plans that are being analyzed during the environmental process do not match the plans being authorized for right-of-way and construction funds. Each team member must utilize the same plans and project information when conducting their studies.
2. All documents and studies are not prepared in accordance with the most current regulations and methodologies. If changes to the regulations have occurred since the study began, the study must be updated prior to submittal of the NEPA document to the federal agency for approval. If methodologies have changed, the preparer must discuss the change with environmental office supervisors and managers as well as agency personnel to determine if the study must be redone.
3. Not utilizing agreed upon methodology
4. Appropriate agency consultations not conducted

Additional common errors include:

1. Unsubstantiated conclusions
2. Lack of consistency between sections
3. Lack of consistency between text and table
4. Lack of consistency between the plans and the environmental analysis
5. Details discussed in text not displayed on graphics
6. Sections missing
7. Statements not in keeping with GDOT policy statements (e.g., definition of substantial noise impact)
8. Statements not in keeping with regulations (e.g., no buffer variance required since encroachment is the result of a perpendicular crossing)
9. Statements not in keeping with agency policy (e.g., not addressing all three aspects of logical termini; not adhering to FHWA's 4(f) policy paper)
10. Graphics and/or table not cited in the narrative
11. Inconsistent style (e.g., capitalization convention, acronym use, change in font type/size, "Department" v. "GDOT")
12. Not defining terms not used by the general public
13. Not spell-checked
14. Incorrect grammar
15. Comments in previous review not addressed

Consultants are expected to have procedures to ensure that their documents are of the highest quality prior to submittal to the GDOT. A QC-QA review sheet should accompany every report and document submitted. Studies and documents will not be circulated or reviewed without this sheet.

5.0 Plan Development Process (PDP) overview and timing of environmental activities

The **PDP** establishes the process by which a project advances from concept development through final design. The two major phases of the PDP are Preliminary and Final Design. Preliminary Design begins with concept development and culminates in the completion of right-of-way (ROW) plans. Final Design results in the completion of construction documents suitable for letting. Right-of-way acquisition occurs concurrently with Final Design.

The environmental document is prepared during Preliminary Design as project decisions are being made. According to 23 CFR 771.113, final design activities and ROW acquisition cannot commence until the NEPA document has been approved.

During concept development, environmental resources (except archaeological resources) should be identified. These include

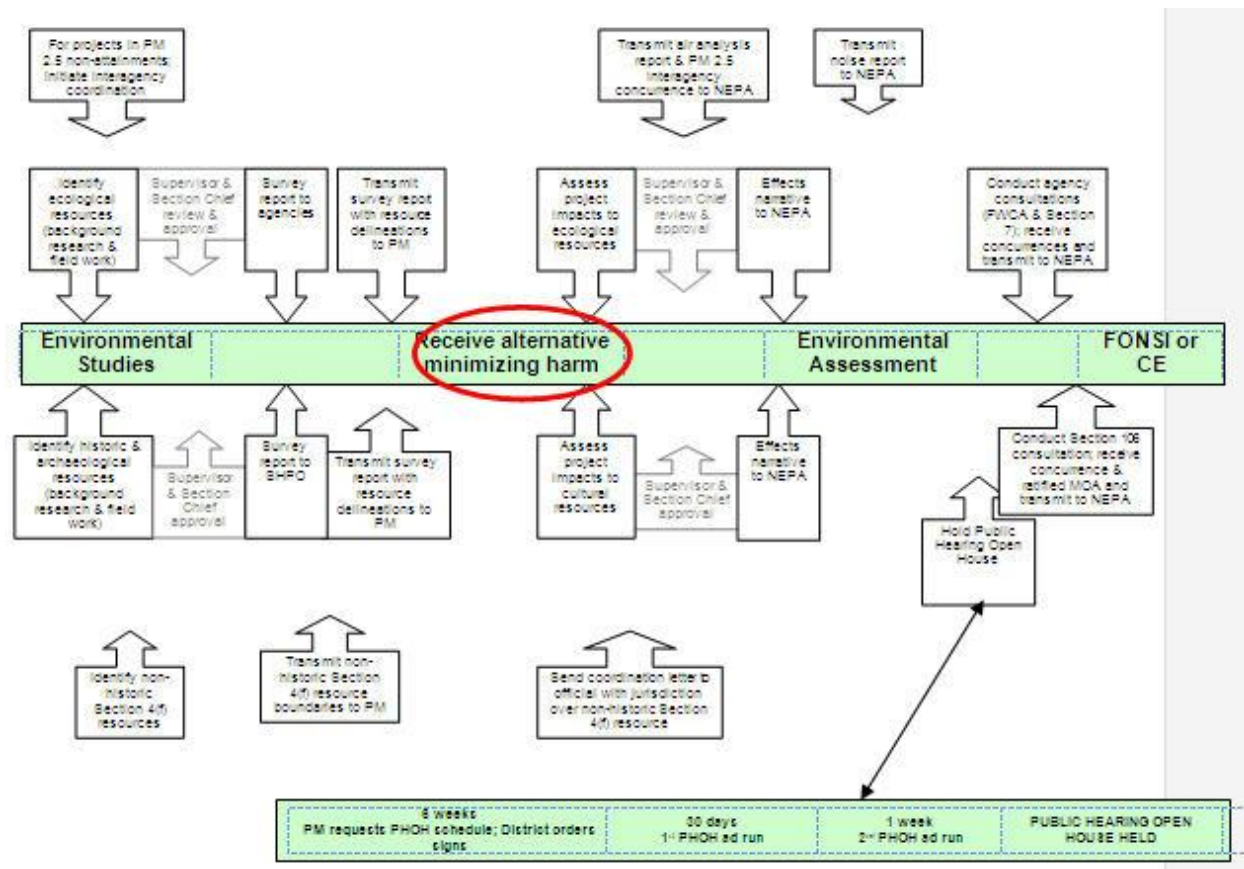
- Historic resources and their boundaries,
- Non-historic Section 4(f) resource boundaries (publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges),
- Jurisdictional Waters of the US (wetlands, streams, and open waters),
- Vegetative buffers (25 feet for warm water streams and state waters, 50 feet for cold-water trout streams),
- Cemeteries,
- Threatened and Endangered species and their habitat,
- Community facilities.

A public involvement strategy also should be developed during the concept phase to insure that the public, including environmental justice communities, are appropriately engaged during the decision-making process. Public involvement is critical as decisions are made concerning the expenditure of public funds. Major projects may require a stand-alone Public Involvement Plan.

Once a preliminary alignment has been developed, archaeological resources can be identified. Once the project centerline has been established, the noise analysis can commence.

Environmental resources identified during the concept development and any time thereafter should be considered when developing/designing a project. Various environmental laws require that every effort be made to avoid and (or) minimize harm to environmental resources. A timeline is shown below.

TIMELINE OF NEPA ACTIVITIES FOR CEs and EA/FONSIs



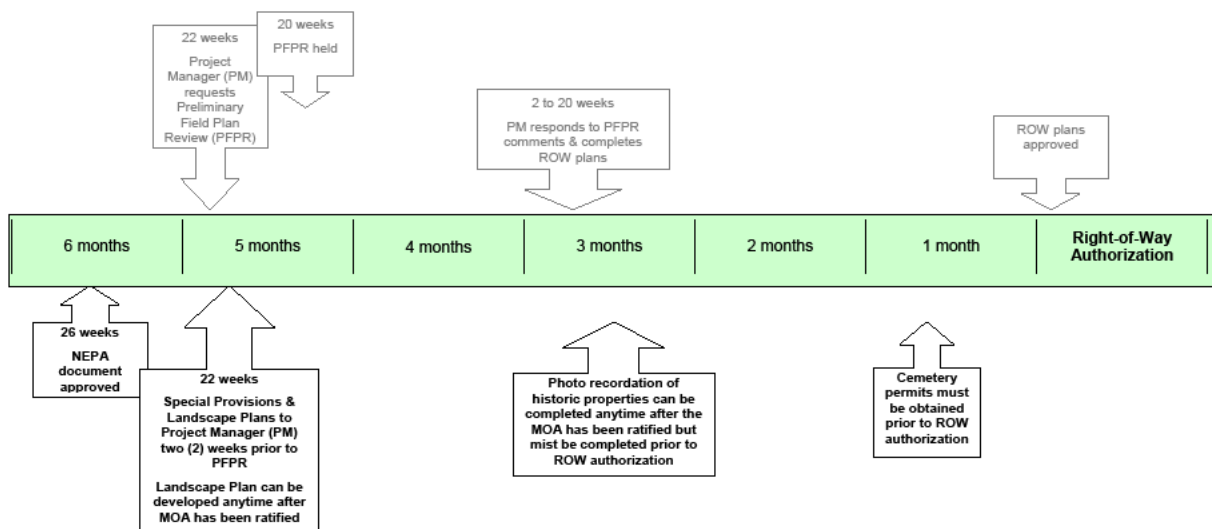
The PM should ensure that all environmental resources are shown on project displays and plans as soon as possible to ensure that the design team (e.g., roadway, bridge, utilities) can make every effort to avoid or minimize harm. When the project cannot avoid an identified resource, the designer must coordinate with the NEPA analyst to develop the most desirable alternative that meets all design criteria. A design exception or variance may be applicable in some situations to minimize environmental impacts. Once the most desirable alternative is developed, one that weighs and balances environmental impacts with solving the transportation problem expressed by the project's purpose and need, the environmental team members will assess project impacts and conduct the appropriate agency consultations.

Environmental approvals are valid until the project footprint changes or impacts to environmental resources change (e.g., the extension of a culvert within the ROW). Any project change considered must be coordinated with the NEPA analyst to evaluate the need for and timely completion of environmental reevaluations.

The project team must consider all issues before making a change to the project. *Again, **collaboration** and **communication** amongst all team members (environmental and design) are critical for the successful advancement of a project.*

The environmental team should strive to have the NEPA document approved six months prior to the scheduled date for ROW authorization to allow the design team adequate time to prepare for and hold the Preliminary Field Plan Review (PFPR) and to finalize ROW plans. The project team should be mindful of the scheduled date to request the PFPR. Please see below for a timeline of environmental activities needed prior to ROW authorization.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO RIGHT-OF-WAY AUTHORIZATION



When seeking a major authorization (i.e., ROW or construction), the environmental document also must be reconsidered. The approval must match the project plans prior to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) granting the authorization. So if changes have been made since the last NEPA approval, a reevaluation will be needed. Please keep in mind that if new regulations have been enacted or if environmental studies are not current, studies may need to be updated before the next federal authorization can occur.

6.0 Maintenance and availability of this manual

The GDOT's Office of Environmental Services maintains this manual. Copies of the manual can be found on GDOT's [ROADS webpage](#).

7.0 Amendments

As needed, amendments to this manual will be adopted and posted on the website. Revisions will be noted at the front of this manual. It will be the user's responsibility to utilize the most current version of this manual.

Users can be added to an email list for notification of changes or updates to manuals posted on the "Design Policies, Guidelines and Procedures" section of the [ROADS webpage](#). Updates for this Environmental Procedures Manual will be included in these notifications.

8.0 Training

To be determined and scheduled in the future.

9.0 Style Guide

A [style guide](#) has been developed to ensure consistent usage of common terms. Since style has been pre-established, reviewers will be able to focus on substantive issues.

10.0 Glossary of Acronyms

Below are common acronyms used throughout this manual. Definitions for these terms can be found in Section 11.0.

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
AOE	Assessment of Effects
APE	Area of Potential Effect
ARPA	Archaeological Resource Protection Act
ATIS	Advanced Traveler Information Systems
ATMS	Advanced Traffic Management Systems
BA	Biological Assessment
BO	Biological Opinion
CA	Certification Acceptance
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAC	Citizens' Advisory Committee
CE or CatEx	Categorical Exclusion
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, as amended
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program
CO	Carbon monoxide
CR	Cultural Resources
CSD/CSS	Context Sensitive Design/Context Sensitive Solutions
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWP	Construction Work Program
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DHV	Design Hour Volumes

DJW	Description of Jurisdictional Wetlands
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
DOE	Request for Determination of Eligibility
DOI	United States Department of the Interior
EA	Environmental Assessment
EAOE	Ecological Assessment of Effects
EER	Environmental Effects Report
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EJ	Environmental Justice
EO	Executive Order
EPD	Environmental Protection Division
ESA	Endangered Species Act, 1973
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FFPR	Final Field Plan Review
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FOS	Full Oversight Project
FPR	Field Plan Review
FRA	Federal Rail Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FWCA	Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
FY	Fiscal Year
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GEPA	Georgia Environmental Policy Act of 1991
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GPS	Global Positioning System
GRIP	Governor's Road Improvement Program
GRTA	Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
HABS	Historic American Building Survey
HAER	Historic American Engineering Record
HOV	High Occupancy Vehicle
HPD	Historic Preservation Division
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
IJR	Interchange Justification Report
IMR	Interchange Modification Report
IP	Individual Permit
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
ITS	Intelligent Transportation System
JCP	Joint Coordination Procedures
JPN	Joint Public Notice
L&D	Location and Design Approval
LCP	Local Coordination Procedures
LGPA	Local Government Project Agreement

LOS	Level of Service
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOG	Manual of Guidance
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MSAT	Mobile Source Air Toxics
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriations Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NHS	National Highway System
NOD	Notice of Decision
NOX	Nitrogen Oxide
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permitting Program
NPS	National Park Service
NR	National Register of Historic Places
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NWP	Nationwide Permit
O3	Ozone
OCGA	Official Code of Georgia Annotated
ORR	Open Records Request
P&N	Purpose and Need
P&P	Policies and Procedures
PA	Programmatic Agreement
PAR	Practical Alternatives Review
PCN	Pre-Construction Notification
PDP	Plan Development Process
PE	Preliminary Engineering
PFPR	Preliminary Field Plan Review
PHOH	Public Hearing Open House
PIF	Property Information Form
PIOH	Public Information Open House
PM	Particulate Matter
PM	Project Manager
PM _{2.5}	Fine Particulate Matter
PMA	Project Management Agreement
PNRC	Project Nomination Review Committee
PPG	Plan Presentation Guide
PPM	Parts Per Million
PS&E	Plans, Specifications, and Estimates
RDC	Regional Development Center
RFP	Request for Proposal
RFQ	Request for Qualifications
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	Right-of-way
RP	Regional Permit
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan

SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SHIP	State Highway Improvement Plan
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SOV	Single Occupancy Vehicle
SOW	Scope of Work
SR	State Route
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program
STURAA	Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987
T&E	Threatened and Endangered Species
TCM	Transportation Control Measures
TCP	Traditional Cultural Property
TDM	Travel Demand Management
TE	Transportation Enhancement Activity
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMA	Transportation Management Association
TOPPS	Transportation Online Policy and Procedure System
TSM	Transportation Systems Management
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USNMFS	United States National Marine Fisheries Service
VE	Value Engineering
VPD	Vehicles Per Day

11.0 Common terms defined

Advanced Traveler Information Systems (ATIS) – The ATIS portion of Georgia’s Transportation Management System (TMS) allows the dissemination of information to the traveler so that intelligent decisions can be made; the Georgia Department of Transportation’s (GDOT) goal is to have that information updated almost instantly on a 24-hour per day basis. See also Intelligent Transportation System (ITS).

Advanced Traffic Management Systems (ATMS) – The ATMS portion of Georgia’s Transportation Management System (TMS) is designed to gather information allowing the GDOT to detect problems, verify their existence, and respond with the proper solutions; it does so in real time. See also Intelligent Transportation System (ITS).

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) - An independent federal agency that provides guidance for federal activities, programs and policies as they affect historic properties.
www.achp.gov

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) – A nonprofit, nonpartisan, national organization that advocates transportation related policies and provides technical services to support the states; AASHTO represents highway and transportation departments in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
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Washington, D.C. 20001
Telephone: (202) 624-5800, Fax: (202) 624-5806
www.aashto.org

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) – A convention for measuring traffic volumes; the average of a yearlong traffic count that includes weekend traffic.

Archaeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) Permit - 16 USC 470Hh. Passed in 1979, and its 1988 amendments, ARPA prohibits the professional excavation and removal of archaeological resources on federal and tribal lands without a permit issued by relevant land management agencies. Permits for excavation and removal are site specific and require approval of a technical research design or treatment plan prepared by a qualified applicant.

Area of Potential Effect (APE) - The area in which effects may occur to environmental resources.

Assessment of Effects (AOE) - Document prepared in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and submitted to the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). It discusses the effects of the implementation of the proposed project to historic and archaeological resources that are listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NR). This document requires concurrence of the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

Attainment Area – An area considered to have air quality that meets or exceeds the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) health standards used in the Clean Air Act (CAA). An area may be in attainment for one pollutant and a non-attainment area for others. Non-attainment areas are areas considered to not have met these standards for designated pollutants.

Authorization of a project - The process by which funds are approved for various stages of a project's development, such as preliminary engineering (PE), right-of-way (ROW) authorization, or construction.

Average Daily Traffic (ADT) – A convention for measuring traffic; the average number of vehicles passing a fixed point in a 24-hour timeframe (weekday).

Biological Assessment (BA) – Document prepared in compliance with formal Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and submitted to US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) discussing potential impacts to protected species.

Biological Opinion (BO) – The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) response to a Biological Assessment (BA); lists conditions needed for a project to proceed.

Carbon monoxide (CO) - A colorless, odorless, tasteless, poisonous gas that impedes oxygenation of blood; it is produced by incomplete burning of carbon-based fuels, including gasoline, oil, and wood.

Categorical Exclusion (CE or CatEx) – A determination made under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); a CE demonstrates that the proposed action will not individually or cumulatively have a significant environmental effect. According to 23 CFR 771.115(b), a CE is a Class II action.

Certification Acceptance (CA) - The procedure authorized by 23 USC 117(a) for state administration of federal-aid projects.

Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) – Representative group of stakeholders that meets regularly to discuss project issues of common concern. Citizens' Advisory Committees are project specific and meet to provide input on project decisions.

Clean Air Act (CAA) – 1970 comprehensive federal law that regulates air emissions from area, stationary and mobile sources. It authorizes the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect public, health and the environment.

Clean Water Act (CWA) – Congress enacted the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972. As amended in 1977, this law became commonly known as the Clean Water Act (CWA). The Act established the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States. Many Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) projects require permits pursuant to Section 404 of this act.

Coast Guard (USCG) – Agency within the Department of Homeland Security that ensures the safe transportation of America's waterways and the protection of the marine environment.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) – Publication of codified federal regulations.

Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, as amended (CERCLA) – Provides for liability, compensation, clean-up and emergency response for hazardous substances released into the environment and the clean-up of inactive hazardous waste disposal sites.

Concept - A consensus beginning recommendation, idea, or starting point of a transportation solution to an identified transportation need.

Conformity – A process to assess the compliance of any transportation plan, program, or project with air quality implementation plans. The Clean Air Act (CAA) defines the conformity process.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) – The primary purpose of this program is to fund transportation projects and programs in non-attainment and maintenance areas, which reduce transportation related emissions; CMAQ funds generally cannot be used for projects that result in the construction of new capacity available for Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOV).

Construction Work Program (CWP) - A listing of state and federally funded projects approved by the State Transportation Board with one or more elements, preliminary engineering (PE), right-of-way (ROW) authorization, or construction, scheduled in the current and next five fiscal years.

Consultant Pre-qualification – Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has adopted rules for the qualification of consultants prior to consideration for providing engineering and environmental services. The qualification period is three years from the date of qualification unless updated.

<http://www.dot.state.ga.us/doingbusiness/consultants/prequal/Pages/default.aspx>

Office of Program Delivery

Context Sensitive Design/Context Sensitive Solutions (CSD/CSS) - Context Sensitive Design/Context Sensitive Solutions (CSD/CSS) is a collaborative approach to design that weaves together design principles, environmental concerns and community quality of life into one complete package. It balances the concerns and desires of the community for their environment and way of life with the sound engineering practices endorsed by American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). It also firmly involves the public in the decision-making process to encourage ownership and responsibility for the final product. The GDOT has published a [Context Sensitive Design Manual](#).

Controlling Criteria - Those controlling design guidelines as defined by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and accepted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), that a project should be designed to meet using good engineering judgment. A design exception or variance will be obtained when one or more of these controlling criteria cannot be met. See Chapter 8 of the Plan Development Process ([PDP](#)) for a listing of the controlling criteria.

Cooperating Agency - As defined in the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) *Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), "any organization other than a lead agency which has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in . . . [a] major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment." The CEQ emphasizes that agency cooperation should begin early in the NEPA process.

Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Part of the Department of the Army within the Department of Defense; administers permitting activities under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) - Coordinates federal environmental efforts and works closely with agencies and other White House offices in the development of environmental

policies and initiatives. The Council's Chair who is appointed by the President with advice and consent of the Senate serves as the principal environmental advisor to the President and Vice President. In addition, CEQ reports annually to the President on the state of the environment; oversees federal agency implementation of the environmental impact assessment process; and acts as referee when agencies disagree over the adequacy of such assessments. The Council on Environmental Quality was established by Congress within the Executive Office of the President with passage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

Cultural Resources (CR) – Historic and archaeological resources.

dBA – The decibel (**dB**) is used to measure sound levels. It describes the ratio between the quantity of two levels, the level being measured and a reference. The '**A**' weighted frequency scale is used in traffic noise measurement and abatement because it best approximates the frequency response of the human ear.

De minimis – Provision in the transportation bill enacted in August 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) which states that the requirements of Section 4(f) will be considered to be satisfied if the Section 4(f) protected resource will not be adversely affected by the proposed action.

Department of the Interior (DOI) – Federal agency with responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. From its establishment in 1849, DOI has managed many varied programs including Indian Affairs, administering land grants, improving historic western emigrant routes, marking boundaries, and conducting research on geological resources. Two agencies within DOI often consulted with during environmental studies are the Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Park Service (NPS).

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – The state agency whose mission is to sustain, enhance, protect, and conserve Georgia's natural, historic, and cultural resources for present and future generations. Both the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) are part of DNR.

www.gadnr.org

Description of Jurisdictional Wetlands (DJW) - Describes the results of the wetlands survey and is included in the ecology report.

Design Exception – Permission must be obtained whenever a new construction or reconstruction project (this excludes maintenance resurfacing projects and resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation [3R projects]) contains design features that do not meet the current American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) publications, "A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets" (Green Book) and "The Policy on Design Standards - Interstate System," as adopted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). For interstate projects, the FHWA will be the agency that grants design exceptions. For all other projects, both federal and state funded, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Chief Engineer grants design exceptions. See Chapter 8 of the Plan Development Process ([PDP](#)).

Design Hour Volumes (DHV) - Peak hour traffic in the design year.

Design Variance - Whenever a new construction or reconstruction project contains nonstandard items that are not controlling criteria or which do not meet Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) policy/guidelines, a design variance must be requested from the GDOT Chief Engineer. See Chapter 8 of the Plan Development Process ([PDP](#)).

Determination of Eligibility (DOE) – See Request for Determination of Eligibility.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) – The draft phase of a Class I NEPA document (23 CFR 771.115(a) – see Environmental Impact Statement, below); it evaluates all reasonable alternatives to a federal action and discusses the reasons why other alternatives have been eliminated from a detailed study; the DEIS also summarizes studies, reviews, consultation and coordination required under environmental laws and executive orders to the extent appropriate at this stage in the environmental process.

Ecological Assessment of Effects (EAOE) – This is the Phase II document that is prepared to assess project effects to ecological resources.

Endangered Species Act, 1973 (ESA) – A federal law that provides a program for the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered plants and animals, and the habitats in which they are found.

Environmental Assessment (EA) – One of three classes of action (Class III, 23 CFR 771.115(c)) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). An EA must be prepared for federal actions in which the significance of the environmental impacts is not clearly established. Both draft (DEA) and final (FEA) documents are required.

Environmental Effects Report (EER) – A report prepared for state-funded projects in accordance with the Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA) for projects that will have a significant adverse effect on the quality of the environment.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – One of three classes of action (Class I, 23 CFR 771.115(a)) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). An EIS must be prepared for federal actions in which a significant social, economic, or environmental impact is anticipated. Both draft (DEIS) and final (FEIS) documents are required.

Environmental Justice (EJ) – Executive Order (EO) 12898, signed in 1994 that requires the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, or economic status with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of federal environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people shall bear a disproportionately high share of the negative environmental impacts that result from a particular project or program and shall share in the benefits derived from such projects and programs.

Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) – A federal agency charged with protecting public health and the environment.

www.epa.gov

Environmental Protection Division (EPD) – A division within the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) charged with protecting public health and the environment.

www.georgiaepd.org

Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) – An area designated on project plans in which any environmental resource given consideration during environmental studies has been identified.

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) – Waters and bottom habitats that are necessary to federally managed marine species' lifecycle including their spawning, breeding, feeding or growth into maturity. Impacts to EFH are considered in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Essential Fish Habitat can be found in Georgia's coastal counties, i.e., Camden, Glynn, McIntosh, Liberty, Bryan and Chatham.

Executive Order (EO) – An order, having the force of law that is signed by the President of the United States.

Exempt Projects - A federal-aid project whose plans are not subject to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) oversight. However, the FHWA retains approval authority for the environmental document. See Chapter 8 of the Plan Development Process ([PDP](#)).

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) - An independent federal agency founded in 1975 and charged with reducing the loss of life and property and the protection of our nation's critical infrastructure. This federal agency is charged with the enforcement of EO 11988 (protection of floodplains). The primary function of the agency is to avoid long and short term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains. The agency assesses floodplain hazards in all construction of federal and federally-aided buildings, structures, roads, or facilities, which encroach upon or affect the base floodplain.

www.fema.gov

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) - An agency of the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), it is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with field offices across the United States. The FHWA administers the Federal-aid Highway Program in cooperation with the states. It also administers the Federal-lands Highway Program.

www.fhwa.dot.gov

The FHWA Georgia Division Office is located at:

Georgia Division Office (HDA-GA)
61 Forsyth Street, SW, Suite 17T100
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3104
Telephone: 404-562-3630

Federal Rail Administration (FRA) – An agency of the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), the FRA promotes safe, environmentally sound, successful rail transportation to meet current and future needs.

www.fra.dot.gov

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – An agency of the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), the FTA helps cities and communities nationwide provide mobility to their citizens. Through its grant programs, the FTA provides financial and planning assistance to help plan, build, and operate rail, bus, and para-transit systems.

www.fta.dot.gov

Field Plan Review (FPR) – Field inspection of project plans and special provisions conducted at various stages of the Plan Development Process ([PDP](#)) (see entries under Preliminary Field Plan Review [PFPR] and Final Field Plan Review [FFPR]).

Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) – National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document prepared after circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and consideration of comments received.

Final Field Plan Review (FFPR) - A review of final plans and specifications, special provisions, permits, environmental commitments and right-of-way agreements. The FFPR is to be held a minimum of 22 weeks prior to letting. (See also Field Plan Review [FPR])

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) – A National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document concluding that federal actions evaluated in an Environmental Assessment (EA) will not significantly affect the quality of the environment.

Fiscal Year (FY) - The State of Georgia fiscal year is July 1 to June 30. All budgets and state programs, including transportation plans, adhere to this fiscal year. The federal fiscal year is October 1 to September 30.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) – Requires coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for all stream channel changes unless covered under the Joint Coordination Procedures ([JCP](#)).

Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – A part of the US Department of the Interior (DOI); the principle federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants, and their habitats.

www.fws.gov

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) – A federal law passed in 1996 that provides that any person can make request for government information.

Full Oversight Project (FOS) - Those projects administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for which the FHWA has full responsibility for review, approval and authorization. An FOS Project was formally known as a "Non-CA" project.

Functional Classification - A grouping of roads, streets, and highways into an integrated system, within which each roadway facility is ranked by its relative importance and function in providing access and mobility within the integrated system. Based on guidelines issued by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) ranks roadways as local roads, major or minor collectors, and minor or principal arterials. Functional Classification Systems are developed, in cooperation with local officials, for each county and city and submitted to the FHWA for approval.

General Section 404 Permits – Projects below certain thresholds to impacts to Waters of the US may qualify for one of two general permits – Nationwide or Regional.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) – A computer system capable of holding and using spatial data describing places on the earth's surface.

Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) – State agency responsible for planning, constructing, maintaining and improving the state's roads and bridges. The GDOT also provides planning and financial support for other modes of transportation such as mass transit and airports. It also provides airport and air safety planning. Formerly the State Highway Department (created on August 16, 1916 by an act of the Legislature), the GDOT was created in 1972 by former Governor Jimmy Carter.

The primary design and right-of-way staff are located in the General Office (GO) at:

One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
(404) 631-1990 Main Office

The environmental analysis staff is located at:

Office of Environmental Services
One Georgia Center
16th floor
600 West Peachtree Street, NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
(404) 631-1100

GDOT Homepage: www.dot.state.ga.us

Georgia Environmental Policy Act of 1991 (GEPA) - This act requires the evaluation and disclosure of environmental effects of proposed state-funded actions. In general, a proposed action by a government agency must be assessed by the responsible official (the Commissioner is the responsible Georgia Department of Transportation [GDOT] official) of that agency to determine and document whether or not the proposed action may significantly affect the quality of the environment. In the event of a determination of a significant adverse effect, GEPA requires an evaluation of alternatives that would avoid the adverse impact, as well as any measures to minimize harm.

Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) – This 15–member board is responsible for assuring that local governments meet state requirements for land use planning; also charged with combating air pollution, traffic congestion and poorly planned development in metropolitan Atlanta.

www.grta.org

Global Positioning System (GPS) – GPS is funded by and controlled by the US Department of Defense. While there are many thousands of civil users of GPS worldwide, the system was designed for and is operated by the US military. GPS provides specially coded satellite signals that can be processed in a GPS receiver, enabling the receiver to compute position, velocity and time. Four GPS satellite signals are used to compute positions in three dimensions and the time offset in the receiver clock.

Governor's Road Improvement Program (GRIP) – Initiated in 1989 by a resolution of the state legislature and the Governor to connect 95 percent of the cities in Georgia with a population of 2,500 or more to the interstate system. The GRIP system will also ensure that 98 percent of all areas of Georgia will be within 20 miles of a four-lane road.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) – HOV lanes have been built to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution by giving a faster travel time for those who carpool, vanpool or ride buses. The lanes are identified by the white diamonds on signs above and painted on the lanes, and the white double lines or barriers separating them from the other lanes of traffic. High Occupancy Vehicle lanes are reserved for vehicles carrying two or more persons. Exceptions include motorcycles and registered alternative fuel vehicles.

Historic American Building Survey (HABS) – A program administered by the National Park Service (NPS); operates under Congressional authority from the Historic Sites Act of 1935 to document historic properties and make available to the public an archive of America's architectural heritage.

www.nps.gov/history/hdp/habs/index.htm

Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) – A program administered by the National Park Service (NPS); documents important engineering and industrial sites.

www.nps.gov/history/hdp/haer/index.htm

Historic Preservation Division (HPD) – A division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that serves as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in Georgia. Working in partnership with the US Department of the Interior (DOI) and local communities, HPD carries out the mandates of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended, and works to preserve the historical, architectural and archaeological resources of Georgia.

www.gashpo.org

Housing and Urban Development, Department of (HUD) – Cabinet level federal agency; promotes a decent, safe, and sanitary home and suitable living environment for every American.

Their mission includes creating opportunities for home ownership; providing housing assistance for low-income persons; working to create, rehabilitate and maintain the nation's affordable housing; enforcing the nation's fair housing laws; helping the homeless; spurring economic growth in distressed neighborhoods; and helping local communities meet their development needs.

www.hud.gov

Individual Permit (IP) – Pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA); an IP is required from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for projects having a specific level of impacts to Waters of the US.

Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) – The use of computer and communications technology to facilitate the flow of information between travelers and system operators. Intelligent Transportation System also includes enhancements to existing transportation infrastructures to enable them to function at a higher, more efficient level. The major goals for such systems are to proactively manage congestion, improve traveler safety, reduce operational cost for commercial vehicles, and enhance coordination between multimodal transit operations and users. By minimizing congestion of freeway and arterial infrastructure, and maximizing the convenience of mass transportation alternatives for travelers, more efficient use of existing infrastructure is achieved with an associated reduction of environmental pollution. These enhancements are for the most part intelligent solutions made possible by new technologies. Advanced Traffic Management Systems (ATMS) and Advanced Traveler Information Systems (ATIS) are two of the technologies under the umbrella of ITS.

Interchange Justification Report (IJR) - An analysis, prepared in accordance with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines, for any proposed new interchange on the Interstate System. The IJR is typically a Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Office of Planning activity prepared with the assistance of the GDOT Division of Engineering. Due to its nature, the IJR provides planning level information for a tentative location with the concept displayed on aerial photography. The GDOT Office of Planning submits the IJR to FHWA for consideration.

Interchange Modification Report (IMR) - An operational analysis, prepared in accordance with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines, for the addition of access points to an existing Interstate interchange. The IMR addresses Interstate access point changes that are needed to improve operations and safety of an existing interchange. The IMR is a Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Division of Engineering activity, prepared with the assistance of the GDOT Office of Planning. Due to its nature, the IMR is engineering oriented, providing detailed analyses and preliminary design plans. The GDOT Office of Planning submits the IMR to FHWA for consideration.

Joint Coordination Procedures (JCP) – Streamlining procedures for coordination for 404 Permits, consultation for Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and coordination under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA). This procedure typically involves a modification to agencies standard application requirements to help streamline the overall review

process. Minor projects subject to this streamlining agreement include but are not limited to traffic signal upgrades, resurfacing with minimal shoulder rebuilding, intersection improvements, and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) improvements.

Joint Public Notice (JPN) – US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) notification to natural resource agencies that an Individual Permit (IP) has been applied for; this notice also is a solicitation for public comment.

L10 – One of two noise descriptors (Leq is the other) used in abatement procedures. A weighted decibel, the sound level that is exceeded 10 percent of the time (the 90th percentile) in the noisiest hour of the day.

Leq – One of two noise descriptors (L10 is the other) used in abatement procedures. Leq is the equivalent steady-state sound level that in a stated period of time contains the same acoustic energy as the time-varying sound level during the same time period. Leq is essentially an average reading over a 10 minute period.

Let Date – The date that bid construction bid proposals will be opened for Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) projects. The Let Date generally ends the Plan Development Process ([PDP](#)). Projects are advertised four weeks before the Let Date.

Level of Service (LOS) - Describes conditions for motorists in terms of such factors as speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort and convenience, and safety. Level of Service is defined with designations ranging from A to F; LOS "A" represents the best operating conditions and LOS "F" represents the worst operating conditions.

Local Coordination Procedures ([LCP](#)) – Streamlining procedures for the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines of the Clean Water Act (CWA) for projects requiring an Individual Permit (IP); agreed to by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) in coordination with the Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Marine Fisheries Service (USNMFS), the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and the Environmental Protection Division (EPD).

Local Government Project Agreement (LGPA) - The LGPA delineates the local government's role in advancing a project through design to construction. The local government's role may include such items as responsibility for design, environmental reports and documents, public and private utility relocations, purchasing of right-of-way (ROW), letting, construction supervision, or construction. The LGPA also serves to indicate the local government's support and financial commitment to the proposed project. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Office of Programming normally prepares the LGPA (see Project Management Agreement [PMA])

Location and Design Approval (L&D):

1. Federal-aid projects:

Location and design approval is granted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

with their approval of the project's environmental document acknowledging that Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has selected an appropriate location and has committed to a specific design of the proposed project.

2. State-funded projects:

Location and design approval is granted by the Chief Engineer with the certification that Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has completed the required public involvement process, the Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA) documentation, has selected an appropriate location, and has committed to a specific design of the proposed project.

Logical Termini - A term used to describe the beginning and ending points of a proposed transportation improvement and whether the selection of these points has a rational basis when viewed in light of the project's Purpose and Need. Federal regulations [23 CFR 771.111(f)] note that for termini to be logical they must be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope, have independent utility, and not restrict consideration of alternatives for reasonable foreseeable transportation improvements.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation & Management Act – Requires the identification of unavoidable adverse impacts to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). It also requires consultation with the US National Marine Fisheries Service (USNMFS).

Manual of Guidance (MOG) - Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) manual addressing personnel guidelines; first replaced by the Transportation Online Policy and Procedure System (TOPPS) and currently found in [Policies and Procedures \(P&P\)](#).

Major Project - A project that significantly changes the function of the facility being improved, or requires the acquisition of significant amounts of right-of-way (ROW), or has a significant impact on abutting property, or has significant changes in traffic patterns, or has significant social, economic, or environmental effects. A Major Project will not follow "Time Saving Procedures." A Major Project will require a Public Hearing Open House (PHOH) or the opportunity for a PHOH and Location and Design (L&D) Approval.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) - Document developed during the Section 106 process when adverse effects to historic or archaeological resources cannot be avoided; stipulates mitigation measures to be carried out to compensate for the adverse effect.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – An interagency agreement often concerning procedural issues.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) - A local government agency charged with planning, including transportation planning, of a metropolitan area. The MPO performs its mission through a series of committees composed of local professional planning staffs, Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) planning and design staffs (in the case where the MPO crosses state lines, the DOT staffs of the affected states), local elected officials (both city and county), citizens, and public input.

Minor Project - A project that does not require a significant amount of right of way and whose environmental analysis can be accomplished with a Categorical Exclusion (CE). Examples of projects that are generally considered minor are bike/pedestrian projects, Transportation Enhancement Activities (TE) and ride sharing projects, transit enhancements, transportation bridge rehabilitation, bridge replacements, signage, lighting, landscaping, traffic barriers, guardrail projects, greenway projects, recreational trail projects, Intelligent Transportation System/Advanced Traffic Management Systems (ITS/ATMS) project less than \$1 million, and maintenance resurfacing projects less than \$1 million.

Mobile Source – Mobile sources include motor vehicles, aircrafts, seagoing vessels, and other transportation modes. The mobile source related air pollutants are carbon monoxide (CO), hydrocarbons (HC) or volatile organic compounds (VOCs), nitrogen oxides (NOX), and small particulate matter (PM₁₀).

Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT) – The Clean Air Act (CAA) identified 188 air toxics, also known as hazardous air pollutants. The US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has assessed this expansive list and identified a group of 21 known as Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs). The USEPA also extracted a subset of this list of 21 that is labeled as the six priority MSATs. These are benzene, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, diesel particulate matter/diesel exhaust organic gases, acrolein, and 1,3-butadiene.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) – The Clean Air Act (CAA) last amended in 1990, requires the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to set NAAQS for pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment; pollutants include carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, lead, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide.

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) - A federal law requiring compliance with a variety of federal environmental laws, regulations and executive orders to insure that information on environmental impacts of any federal action is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and before actions are taken. Thus, environmental compliance is about making project decisions while being aware of environmental impacts. Environmental studies utilize an interdisciplinary approach to identifying environmental considerations. This process must weigh and balance concerns, e.g., historic properties v. wetlands, threatened and endangered species v. community impacts.

National Highway System (NHS) - An interconnected system of principal arterial routes which serve major population centers, international border crossings, ports, airports, public transportation facilities, intermodal transportation facilities, major travel destinations, national defense requirements and interstate and interregional travel. As of January 1999, the NHS contained 161,653 miles of highways, including all Interstate routes, a large percentage of urban and rural principal arterials, the defense strategic highway network, and major highway connectors.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) – Passed in 1966, the NHPA directed the federal government to accelerate its historic preservation programs and activities, to give maximum encouragement to agencies and individuals undertaking preservation by private means, and to

assist state and local governments and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States to expand and accelerate their historic preservation programs and activities.

National Marine Fisheries Service (USNMFS) – A federal agency within the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which is part of the US Department of Commerce. The USNMFS has jurisdiction over threatened and endangered species of a marine nature such as whales, turtles and migrating fish such as sturgeon. It also has jurisdiction over Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

www.nmfs.noaa.gov

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permitting Program (NPDES) – The purpose of this program is to protect human health and the environment; the Clean Water Act (CWA) requires that all point sources (discrete conveyances such as pipe or man-made ditches) discharging pollutants into Waters of the US must obtain an NPDES permit.

National Park Service (NPS) – A part of the US Department of the Interior (DOI); preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The NPS cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

www.nps.gov

National Register of Historic Places (NR) - A program administered by the National Park Service (NPS); for the purpose of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act, properties currently listed in or determined eligible for listing in the NR are considered to be historic.

Nationwide Permits (NWP) – One of two general permits granted under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). For a project to qualify for a NWP, impacts to Waters of the US must fall below certain thresholds. A Preconstruction Notification (PCN) must be submitted to the Corps of Engineers (USACE).

The six most commonly used by Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT):

- NW 3 for maintenance,
- NW 14 for linear transportation projects,
- NW 23 for projects cleared with Categorical Exclusion (CE),
- NW 25 for structural discharges into tightly sealed forms,
- NW 27 for wetland/stream mitigation sites, and
- NW 33 for temporary impacts.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriations Act (NAGPRA) – A federal law passed in 1990 requiring that all past, present and future plans to disturb Native American graves, grave goods, or sacred objects be coordinated with the appropriate Native American groups and that previously removed remains and artifacts be coordinated with and repatriated to the determined ancestral group.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) – The lead conservation agency of the US Department of Agriculture; speaks for the health and fate of America's private land, particularly farms and ranches.

www.nrcs.usda.gov

Nitrogen Oxide (NOX) – The primary criteria pollutant of diesel trucks and buses and a primary contributor to exceedances of ground level ozone.

Non-Attainment Area – A geographic region of the United States that the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has designated as not meeting the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). In Georgia, USEPA has designated both ozone and PM_{2.5} non-attainment areas. A [map](#) of Georgia's non-attainment areas can be found on GDOT's Office of Planning website.

Non-CA (Non-Certificate Acceptance) Projects - This term is no longer used. See Full Oversight (FOS) Project.

Notice of Decision (NOD) - A formal decision document prepared and published following the circulation of an Environmental Effects Report (EER) under the Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA); it takes public comment into account.

Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) – Publication of state laws.

Open Records Request – Request made pursuant to the Georgia Open Records Act that allows private individuals to inspect Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) files. See [Policies and Procedures \(P&P\) 3A-3](#) for procedures and exceptions.

Ozone (O₃) – Ozone is a colorless gas with a sweet odor. Ozone is not a direct emission from transportation sources. It is a secondary pollutant formed when Hydrocarbons (HC) [colorless gaseous compounds originating from evaporation and the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels] and Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) combine in the presence of sunlight. Ozone is associated with smog or haze conditions. Although the ozone in the upper atmosphere protects us from harmful ultraviolet rays, ground-level ozone produces an unhealthy environment in which to live. Ozone is created by human and natural sources.

Particulate Matter (PM), (PM₁₀), (PM_{2.5}) – Any material that exists as solid or liquid in the atmosphere; particulate matter may be in the form of fly ash, soot, dust, fog, fumes, etc. Small and fine particulate matter is too small to be filtered by the nose and lungs. Small particulate matter, also referred to as PM₁₀, is less than 10 microns in size. Fine particulate matter, also referred to as PM_{2.5}, is less than 2.5 microns on size. A micron is one-millionth of a meter.

Parts Per Million (PPM) - Volume based unit of measurement; measurement used by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six principal pollutants.

Plan Development Process (PDP) – A document describing the Georgia Department of Transportation's (GDOT) process from a project's inception and concept development through construction.

Plan Presentation Guide (PPG) – A guide developed to assist designers in the presentation of the work to be accomplished.

Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) - A plan, specification, and estimate review performed on all Full Oversight (FOS) projects by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Office of Bidding Administration prepares the PS&E package with input from the GDOT Project Manager (PM).

Policies and Procedures (P&P) – Online Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) wide policies and procedural directives; formerly called TOPPS.

Practical Alternatives Review (PAR) - A review conducted for those projects that require an Individual Permit (IP) under Section 404 providing an analysis of alternatives to avoid and to minimize harm to Waters of the US including wetlands, streams and open waters. It is developed by the location or design engineer who is responsible for development of the concept. The PAR report describes at least two alignments for a project, including the Wetlands Minimization Alternative (WMA) that avoids all wetlands, and the Best Fit Alternative that balances the avoidance of all types of resources.

Pre-Construction Notification (PCN) – The US Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) notification to natural resource agencies that a General Permit (Nationwide Permit [NWP] or Regional Permit [RP]) in compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) has been applied for.

Preliminary Engineering (PE) – Activities concerned with preparing project plans for letting; includes environmental studies and public involvement.

Preliminary Field Plan Review (PFPR) - A field review of the preliminary plans and draft special provisions conducted by or for the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Office of Engineering Services prior to the development and approval of right-of-way (ROW) plans. This review occurs after the approval of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The emphasis of this review is the coordination of ROW, utilities, bridges and walls, constructability, signs and signals, drainage, and environmental considerations and commitments. For Major Projects, the approval of the PFPR Report defines the beginning of final design and the completion of the ROW plans. See Field Plan Review.

Programmatic Agreement (PA) – An interagency agreement establishing alternative program procedures. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has entered into several PAs to streamline environmental agency review of minor projects.

Project Management Agreement (PMA) - The PMA replaces the Local Government Project Agreement Long Form (LGPALF). The Project Management Agreement is the contract instrument used by GDOT to define the responsibilities between GDOT and the local

government/sponsor. The local government/sponsor responsibilities may include design, public and private utility relocations, purchasing of right-of-way, letting, construction supervision, or construction.

Project Management System (also known as TPRO) - A project database used by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) as a data management tool for storing, updating, and reporting data in the GDOT's computer system. GDOT managers use reports from this database for reviewing and evaluating plan development progress and in making program decisions.

Project Manager (PM) - The person in responsible charge of a project who makes the day-to-day scope, schedule and budget decisions and is responsible for steering, coordinating, and managing a project through the [Plan Development Process \(PDP\)](#) and through the construction phase. The PM must possess and maintain excellent communications and strong organizational skills to ensure projects are ready-to-let on time.

Project Nomination Review Committee (PNRC) - The committee chaired by the State Transportation Planning Administrator, appointed to review projects nominated for inclusion into the Georgia Department of Transportation's (GDOT's) Construction Work Program (CWP). The committee consists of the Director of Program Delivery, Director of Construction, Director of Engineering, Director of Operations, Director of Field Districts, and as a non-voting member, the Chief Engineer. This committee was formerly called State Highway Improvement Plan (SHIP).

Project Schedule - The project schedule includes the planned start and finish dates, based on confirmed assignments and required resources, for each detail activity necessary for the completion of the [Plan Development Process \(PDP\)](#). The approved project schedule, called the schedule baseline, provides the basis for measuring and reporting schedule performance.

Property Information Form (PIF) – A document submitted to the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) which discusses the qualities and characteristics of a historic property and is used to determine whether a property not already listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NR) would qualify for listing. This document requires concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). See also Request for Determination of Eligibility (DOE).

Public Hearing Open House (PHOH) - The legal (required by state law and federal regulations) meeting held by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). A PHOH is conducted as an "open forum meeting" allowing the public to attend during a three hour time frame to discuss the project with GDOT representatives, to ask questions, and to make a comment. There are no formal presentations unless prior approval has been received from the Director of Engineering. A PHOH can only be held after the draft environmental document has been signed by FHWA. State law requires the PHOH be advertised twice, no less than thirty days prior to the meeting and no less than five days prior to the meeting [OCGA 32-3(f)(5)(A)]. All PHOH's are coordinated through GDOT's Office of Environmental Services. The [Plan Development Process \(PDP\)](#) describes the GDOT's procedures for advertising, preparation, and conducting open houses.

Public Information Open House (PIOH) - An informal advertised meeting held by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to inform the public of a proposed project/action and to receive comments from the public on this project/action. The PIOH is conducted as an "open forum meeting" allowing the public to attend during a two or three hour time frame to discuss the project with GDOT representatives, to ask questions, and to comment. There are no formal presentations. A PIOH can be held anytime during project development. Often, the PIOH is held after concept approval, and several PIOHs can be held during the project development. The GDOT policy is to advertise PIOHs twice, three weeks prior to the meeting and one week prior to the meeting. All PIOHs are coordinated through the GDOT Office of Environmental Services.

Purpose and Need (P&N) - A statement identifying and describing the proposed action and the transportation problem(s) or other needs, which the action is intended to address (40 CFR 1502.13). This statement should clearly demonstrate that a "need" exists and should define the "need" in terms understandable to the general public. Data must be provided to support each conclusion. The stated P&N provides the basis of the alternatives discussion, including the no-build. It also provides the criteria by which to identify reasonable alternatives and to identify a preferred, and ultimately a selected alternative. While project impacts are compared to one another, project impacts also are weighed against the stated P&N (i.e., is the need great enough to warrant the impacts on the environment).

Record of Decision (ROD) - Presents the basis for the decision to proceed with a federal action evaluated in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Regional Development Center (RDC) – Public and private sector representatives of each of the state's regions advise the state in the development and implementation of regionally significant community and economic development initiatives. There are 16 RDCs throughout Georgia. These organizations currently are referred to as Regional Commissions.

Regional Permit (RP) – General Section 404 permit under the Clean Water Act (CWA) that allow impacts higher than Nationwide (NWP) permits but project types and impacts that are much lower than those requiring an Individual Permit (IP). A Pre-construction (PCN) must be submitted to the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

The two most common for Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) projects:

- RP 1 – linear transportation projects
- RP 96 – federally funded bridge and culvert replacements

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) - A long range, multi-modal plan for defined geographic regions in the state. The RTP addresses the region's transportation needs over a 20-year period and is developed in cooperation with local, state and federal planning partners and the general public. Federal regulations require regional transportation plans to ensure a transportation system that serves economic, mobility and accessibility needs, and in non-attainment areas to conform to federal air standards. A RTP must include a financial plan demonstrating the consistency of proposed transportation investments with existing and projected sources of revenue. The RTP must be updated at least every four years.

Request for Determination of Eligibility (DOE) - A document submitted to the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) which discusses the qualities and characteristics of an archaeological site and is used to determine whether a site not already listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NR) would qualify for listing. This document requires concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). See also Property Information Form (PIF).

Request for Proposal (RFP) - Solicitation outlining needed consultant services and requesting a proposal based response from private firms.

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) - Solicitation outlining needed consultant services and requesting a qualifications based response from private firms.

Right-of-way (ROW) - Publicly owned corridor in which a transportation facility exists.

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) – Authorizes the federal surface transportation programs for highway, highway safety and transit for five years, 2005-2009. It includes provisions for environmental stewardship and environmental streamlining.

Schedule Review Committee - A committee chaired by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Director of Program Delivery that reviews and approves all submitted project schedules. Other members of the committee consist of the Engineering Office Heads, Program Control Office Heads and the State Scheduling Engineer.

Scope of Work (SOW) - Appended to consultant contracts detailing services to be provided.

Section 4(f) (USDOT Act of 1966) (49 USC 303) - Requires that before land from a significant publicly owned park, recreation area, national wildlife or waterfowl refuge; or any significant historic site (regardless of ownership) can be converted to a transportation use, it must be demonstrated that there is no prudent or feasible alternative to that use and that the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm.

Section 6 (f) (Land and Water Conservation Fund Act) – Before land from a site that was purchased or improved with funds administered under this act can be converted to another use, the Secretary of the Interior must approve the conversion and replacement land must be provided.

Section 7 (Endangered Species Act [ESA]) – A detailed consultation (formal and informal) process with the USFWS when protected species or suitable habitat for a protected species is identified on a proposed project.

Section 9 (Endangered Species Act [ESA]) – A violation of the requirements of this act.

Section 9 (Rivers and Harbors Act, 1899) – Permit issued under the provisions of this act; prohibits the construction of any bridge, dam, dike or causeway over or in any historically navigable waterway of the US without Congressional approval. Administration of Section 9 has been delegated to the Coast Guard (USCG).

Section 10 (Rivers and Harbors Act, 1899) – Permit issued under the provisions of this act; prohibits the unauthorized obstruction or alteration of any historically navigable waterway of the US; the construction of any structure in or over any navigable Water of the US, excavating from or depositing of material in such waters, or the accomplishment of any work affecting the course, location, condition, or capacity of such waters is unlawful unless the work has been recommended by the Chief of Engineers and authorized by the Secretary of the Army.

Section 106 (National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 [NHPA]) - Requires that with all federal undertakings, consideration be given to the effects and the minimization of harm to historic resources (historic and archaeological) that are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NR).

Section 303(d) (Clean Water Act [CWA]) – A list of impaired waters (whose contaminants exceed established limits) established by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

Section 404 Permit (Clean Water Act [CWA]) - Authorization by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) required before fill can be placed or dredging can take place in Waters of the US (includes wetlands, streams and open waters).

Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (Clean Water Act [CWA]) - Guidelines used to evaluate proposed discharges of dredged or fill material in Waters of the United States as required by provisions of Section 404 of the CWA.

Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) – SOVs cannot utilize lanes marked for High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV).

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) – The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for calculating compensatory mitigation requirements for adverse impacts to wetlands, open waters, and/or streams; developed as a tool for administration of wetland and stream mitigation sites in current use by the Savannah District of the Army Corps of Engineers. For the purposes of mitigation banking in Georgia, use of the SOP is required.

State Highway Improvement Plan (SHIP) Committee – Refer to the Project Nomination Review Committee (PNRC). The SHIP Committee no longer exists.

State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) - The official appointed or designated pursuant to Section 101(b)(1) of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 to administer the state historic preservation program. In Georgia, the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) serves as the state preservation office.

www.gashpo.org

State Implementation Plan (SIP) - The SIP is prepared by the State designated agency (Environmental Protection Division [EPD]) containing procedures to monitor, control, maintain and enforce compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Transportation plans must be in conformity with air quality goals established in the SIP. Conformity with the SIP is a condition of federal funding of transportation capacity projects in non-attainment areas.

State Route (SR) – The numerical designation for a highway on the state system.

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) - A list of federally funded and state funded priority transportation project elements (preliminary engineering [PE], right-of-way [ROW], or construction) proposed to be carried out in the current and next three years (a four year plan). It is financially constrained (dollar value of projects programmed is equal to the anticipated revenues per program year), and includes projects consistent with the Statewide Transportation Plan. The STIP is approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and includes all Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects as adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and approved by the Governor.

Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987 (STURAA) – Section 123(f) requires the completion of on- and off-system bridges to determine their historic significance; and to encourage the rehabilitation, reuse and preservation of historic bridges.

Team Leader - The individual appointed by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Project Manager (PM) and charged with the responsibility to coordinate the various activities of the [Plan Development Process \(PDP\)](#).

Threatened and Endangered Species (T&E) - Refers to threatened, endangered and/or species of management concern formally listed by the Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) relative to the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The USFWS publishes lists of T&E species by county.

Time Saving Procedures - A procedure by which a project is advanced to the right-of-way (ROW) authorization state, eliminating the public hearing requirements and the approval of a location and design report. Time Saving Procedures are appropriate for those projects for which the right-of-way requirements are not significant and a Categorical Exclusion (CE) is the appropriate level of environmental documentation. A statement of the appropriateness of time saving procedures will be addressed in the Project Concept Report.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - (Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs) - Each federal agency is required to ensure that no person, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 - (Fair Housing Act) – Unlawful to make unavailable a dwelling to any person because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

TPro - The project management, reporting, and scheduling system portion of the Transportation Information System (TIS) used by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to effectively utilize personnel and fiscal and material resources. TPro is sometimes referred to as the "Project Management System."

Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) – Generally defined as a property that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NR) because of its association with cultural

practices or beliefs of a living community that (a) are rooted in that community's history, and (b) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.

Traffic Engineering Report - A document based on a detailed evaluation and study of an "at-grade" intersection based on current traffic volumes, existing lane configurations, identification of problems associated with traffic control, road geometry (turn lanes), sight distance issues, and accident data evaluation. The report will include a signal warrants analysis and concept design signal (if warranted). Existing condition sketches and figures for any proposed modifications also will be included.

Transportation Control Measures (TCM) – Actions to adjust traffic patterns or reduce vehicle use to reduce air pollutant emissions. These may include High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, provisions for bicycle facilities, ridesharing, telecommuting, etc. Such actions may be included in the State Implementation Plan (SIP) if needed to demonstrate attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Transportation Enhancement Activity (TE) - First authorized under Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991; 10 percent of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds committed to TE projects that include multi-use facilities, transportation aesthetics, and preservation of historic and scenic resources relating to the intermodal transportation system; reauthorized under Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - A short-term list of funded projects covering at least four years, the current year plus the next three years in the urbanized areas of the state. It is financially constrained, conforms to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) in air quality non-attainment areas and updated at least every two years. The TIP includes the list of priority project elements (preliminary engineering [PE], right-of-way [ROW], and construction) to be carried out in each program year. Projects included in the TIP must be consistent with the Transportation Plan adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Governor approves each TIP.

Transportation Management Association (TMA) – A voluntary association of public and private agencies and firms joined to cooperatively develop transportation enhancing programs in a given area.

Transportation Online Policy & Procedure System (TOPPS) – Online Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) wide policies and procedural directives. Replaced by the Policies and Procedures (P&P) website.

Transportation Systems Management (TSM) – Refers to a strategy of improving the existing transportation system through a series of efficiency improvements that are typically low in cost and impact; e.g., intersection improvements.

Travel Demand Management (TDM) – Refers to a strategy of limiting demand for the use of the existing transportation system; strategies designed to increase the efficiency of a

transportation system without increasing its capacity; e.g., van-pooling, car-pooling, altered work hours.

United States Code (USC) – Publication of federal laws.

United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) - Established by Congress in 1966, the USDOT consists of the Office of the Secretary and ten individual administrations: the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Maritime Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Research and Special Programs Administration, the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, and the Administration, and the Federal Carrier Safety Administration.

www.dot.gov

United States Forest Service (USFS) – Part of the US Department of Agriculture; a federal agency that manages public lands in national forests and grasslands. The USFS is also the largest forestry research organization in the world, and provides technical and financial assistance to state and private forestry agencies.

www.fs.fed.us

Utility - All privately, publicly, or cooperatively owned water distribution and sanitary sewer facilities, and systems for producing, transmitting or distributing communication, cable television, power, electricity, light, heat, gas, oil, crude products, steam, waste and storm water not connected with highway drainage, including river gauges, fire and police signals, traffic control devices (including Intelligent Transportation System [ITS]), and street lighting systems, which directly or indirectly serve the public or any part thereof. The term "utility" may also be used to refer to the owner of any above described utility or utility facility.

Value Engineering (VE) - The systematic application of recognized techniques by a multi-disciplined team to identify the function of a product or service, establish a worth for that function, generate alternatives through the use of creative thinking, and provide the needed functions to accomplish the original purpose of the project, reliability, and at the lowest life-cycle cost without sacrificing safety, necessary quality, and environmental attributes of the project. This study is required of all federal-aid highway projects on the National Highway System (NHS) with an estimated total cost of \$25 million or more.

Vehicles Per Day (VPD) - A convention for measuring traffic; a one day, weekday count of traffic.